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Original Letters

PARTHENIA LOCKWOOD TO HER BROTHER AND SISTER.

Contributed by Mrs. John H. Hanley, Monmouth, Ill.

Illinois Rapids, Jan. 15, 1825.

Dear Brother and Sister:—

We have at length arrived at this place after a tedious journey of nine weeks and through the mercy of God we are now in the enjoyment of good health. We had a pleasant journey to Buffalo where we arrived on the 2nd of October and waited for the sailing of the vessel until the 6th. Arrived at Sandusky the 9th, two hundred and fifty miles. Here we found a vessel was bound for Chicago, and the only one which was going thither during the fall. It was a new one and thought to be altogether safe, though not convenient, the cabin being unfinished. We left Sandusky the 11th and arrived in Detroit the 12th. Here we were detained until the 26th when we left there and proceeded on our journey. There were six passengers beside our family on board, all men. We were on the river St. Clair and Lake Huron until the 3d of November, when we arrived at Mackinac. This is truly a gloomy looking place, built on the rocks and gravel stone. There are a few decent buildings, but principally very poor. There is one company of soldiers stationed there, which it would otherwise be deprived of. We left this the 6th and after passing the Straits of Mackinac, we found ourselves on Lake Michigan. Here we were tossed about in the most imminent danger, some part of the time having contrary winds and very high. There is only one good harbor on the lake, and that is at the Manitou Island, a desert, gloomy-looking place sixty miles south of Michelmackinac. At those islands we lay ten days, the vessel set out in a very severe gale of wind in which we expected to

be wrecked; but the merciful Lord preserved us, and on the 21st of November we were landed at Chicago . Here we met with much kindness from Mrs. L.— and Dr. W—'s family. There we staid until the 1st of December, when in hopes of getting to Lewistown we hired a team and started for the rapids of the Illinois. There is no settlement between this and Chicago. We had to encamp out four nights but none of us got sick. We are now at the rapids, one-half mile south of the river, where the Fox River enters it. We are in an open log house with a family of five persons with one room 16x18 for us all. It is the best we can procure except one which is four miles from the settlement. To this place we went and stayed there three weeks, in which time Dr. Davidson who lived in one part of the house, took sick and died. After his death we felt it was not safe for us to remain so far from inhabitants and thought it most prudent to go into the settlement. This doctor is the man that the news prints mentioned as being found living alone at the junction of the Illinois and Spoon rivers. The weather is cold for this country. There has been no boating since the last of November and there is no road to Fort Clark except for footmen, so that it is uncertain how long we will be detained here. * * * * * It has much defeated our calculations in not being able to get through our journey in the fall. There is a man here who talks of leaving his house which he made the year past and if he should we expect to get it and continue here through the summer, for should we be obliged to wait here until the spring it would make it late about getting in a crop on our land, but if we should not get that we shall get through in the spring, if not before, and do what we can.

There are only five families here besides ourselves, excepting the Methodist Mission, and they are removing twenty miles up the Fox River. Some more families are expected here in the spring. It is pleasant here for a new country, the climate milder than New York, but we have cold weather here. The most snow that has fallen at one time as yet is about seven inches. It sometimes falls so deep as to make a little

sleighting but does not last long. The Indians are plenty here and prairie wolves are not scarce and the rattlesnake is an inhabitant of this part of the country. I think I should feel well contented if we could get settled at our home.

Whilst at Chicago I knit and sold socks for which I took three dollars. I sold my socks for seventy-five cents per pair. I could have sold all that I could have knit had I stayed there through the winter. I have several pairs of mittens to knit for the fur company. I have fifty cents per pair for knitting; they find the yarn.

We feel anxious to hear from you. The reason that we have not written before is that there is no regular mail from _____neither from this place, and we have not had convenient opportunity of sending letters, although several opportunities have escaped us. Direct your first letter to Peoria, in Peoria county.

Should any one think of coming into this country by the way of the lakes, the most pleasant time is generally from the first of June through the month of July. It is probable that there will be more sailing on lakes Huron and Michigan the ensuing summer than formerly.

S——says he shall write when he gets settled—thinks of all friends and should be pleased to see them. We have traveled fifteen hundred miles to get here although the distance by land is not more than one thousand miles. We are about one hundred miles from Chicago and one fifty from Lewistown. It is getting late and I am tired, so must close. With much love to you and our other relatives, I should be pleased to particularize them all but time fails me as my sheet.

*PARTHENIA LOCKWOOD.

*This letter was written to friends in the East by Mrs. Parthenia Lockwood, wife of Sheldon Lockwood, one of the earliest residents of Warren County. Mrs. Lockwood was one of the first pioneer women to come to Chicago.

Where blanks occur in this letter, writing illegible.